

Message Text

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ACTION FBOE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 A-01 /012 W

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P 221000Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3229

UNCLAS KUWAIT 2642

FOR A/FBO AND NEA/EX

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ABLD, KU

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT OF CHANCERY WIRING AND INSTALLATION OF
EMERGENCY GENERATOR, PROPERTY NUMBER 02445-A

REF: STATE 144640

1. KUWAIT DISAPPOINTED BY DEPT PROPOSAL TO REPLACE ONLY HAZ-
ARDOUS WIRING AND TO DELAY LIGHT FIXTURES, DISTRIBUTION AND
CIRCUIT BREAKER BOXES, CONNECTION OF GENERATOR AND UPGRADING OF
ELECTRICAL SERVICE. THIS PROCEDURE WILL CAUSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS
WITH REPLACEMENT OF CEILINGS AND INSULATION FUNDED IN REFTEL.

2. PERHAPS POST FAILED TO MAKE CLEAR SERIOUSNESS OF CONDITION
OF EXISTING ELECTRICAL SYSTEM.

A. CHANCERY IS PRESENTLY FED BY THREE MAIN SUPPLIES, ONE TO
OLD WING, ONE TO NEW WING, AND THIRD THROUGH GENERATOR ROOM TO
C&R/TCU AREA. ACCIDENTAL LINKING OF ANY TWO OF THESE CIRCUITS
WOULD CAUSE EXPLOSION AND POSSIBLE FIRE. ADDITIONALLY, MORE
THAN ONE FEEDER CABLE INTO ANY FACILITY IS IN VIOLATION OF
KUWAITI ELECTRICAL CODE.

B. EXISTING WIRING AND CONTROLS IN VERY DANGEROUS CONDITION.
FIBRE COVERED WIRING IN OLD WING IS DETERIORATED TO THE POINT
THAT INSULATION CRUMBLES WHEN TOUCHED. MANY EXISTING CLAMP
TYPE WIRE FUSES ARE CRACKED, BROKEN OR MISSING. SWITCHES AND
BOXES ARE OLD, OVERBURDENED, AND REPLACEMENT PARTS ARE IMPOSS-
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IBLE TO OBTAIN.

C. LIGHT FIXTURES ARE OLD, CRACKED, BROKEN, YELLOWED AND MANY PARTS ARE MISSING. DURING RECENT POWER SURGE, THREE BALLASTS IN EXISTING FIXTURES CAUGHT FIRE. IF THIS HAD OCCURRED AT NIGHT FIRE MIGHT IGNITED CEILINGS BEFORE BEING DETECTED BY SINGLE MSG IN LOBBY OF NEW WING. LUCKLY IT WAS ARRESTED WHEN THE STAFF SMELLED SMOKE. THERE ARE AT LEAST SIX DIFFERENT TYPES OF FLOUR-ESCENT LIGHT FIXTURES IN THE OLD WING. OLD RECESSED AND SURFACE MOUNTED FIXTURES ARE FOUND IN THE SAME ROOM. IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO REMOUNT THESE OLD FLOURESCENT FIXTURES IN A UNIFORM WAY. EITHER ALL SUFRACE MOUNTED OR ALL RECESSED MOUNTED FIXTURES SHOULD BE USED. POST TOOK ADVICE OF DESIGNING ENGINEER IN RECOMMENDING RECESSED MOUNTINGS. WE BELIEVE RECESSED MOUNTINGS ARE SAFER IN VIEW OF RECENT BALLAST FIRES AND EXTREME TEMPERATURES ABOVE CEILINGS.

D. FINALLY, WE ARE DISMAYED BY THE PROSPECT OF REPEATED DISRUPTION OF TWO-THIRDS OF THE CHANCERY FOR COMPLETION OF THIS WORK ON A PIECEMEAL BASIS. WE HAVE EXPENDED CONSIDERABLE EFFORT AND PLANNING WITH ELECTRICAL BIDDERS, CEILING AND INSULATION CONTRACTOR, AND MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER TO ZORDINATE CEILING REPLACEMENT WITH ELECTRICAL WORK. THE CEILING PROJECT WILL REQUIRE SIX WEEKS OF DOUBLING UP AND SHIFTING STAFF AND OFFICES FROM ONE SECTION TO ANOTHER WHILE TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH A HEAVY WORKLOAD IN ALL STAFF SECTIONS. ELECTRICAL WORK CAN BE DONE AT THE SAME TIME WITHOUT MUCH ADDITIONAL EFFORT OR DELAY AND LABOUR COSTS WILL BE MUCH LESS AS WORKING SPACES WILL BE OPEN. DELAY OF INSTALLING NEW SWITCHGEAR AND PANELS WILL RAISE COSTS SHARPLY AS REMOVAL OF FLIMSY WOOD PARTITION WALLS OF RSO OFFICE TO ACCOMMODATE MASONRY/ELECTRICAL CLOSET WILL ALSO REQUIRE ALTERATION OF NEW CEILINGS TO BE INSTALLED.

3. FURTHER DELAY OF INSTALLATION OF NEW EMERGENCY GENERATOR WILL CONTINUE TO HAMPER EMBASSY. POWER FAILURES ARE INCREASINGLY MORE FREQUENT AND PROLONGED AS GROWTH OF KUWAIT TAXES GENERATOR CAPANITY. THIS PROBLEM WILL WORSEN UNTIL NEW LOCAL STEM GENERATOR PLANT IS COMPLETED. POWER FAILURES KNOCK OUT ESSENTIAL SECURITY EQUIPMENT, RADIOS, ALARMS, TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD AND 1A2 INTERCOM SYSTEMS IN EXECUTIVE SUITE AND SEVERAL OTHER OFFICES.

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4. POST REQUESTS FBO RECONSIDER PROPOSAL TO PERFORM ONLY PART OF THIS URGENT ELECTRICAL WORK. RECESSED FLOURESCENT LIGHT FIXTURES CAN BE ELIMINATED BUT IT WILL STILL BE NECESSARY TO FUND NEW SURFACE-MOUNTED FIXTURES IN MANY OFFICES OF OLD WING.

5. WE ALSO SUGGEST YOU DISCUSS OTHER POSSIBLE SAVINGS WITH DESIGN ENGINEER, QUBAYIN, WHO IS DUE IN WASHINGTON JUNE 25.

IF FY 75 FUNDING NOT POSSIBLE, DEPARTING GSO, DAVID ROBINS,
WILL BE CONSULTING IN DEPARTMENT AROUND JULY 7.

6. IN VIEW OF UNCERTAINTY OF THIS WORK, WE HAVE DELAYED STARTING
DATE OF CEILING AND INSULATION REPLACEMENT FROM JULY 15 TO
AUGUST 1 TO PERMIT FBO ADDITIONAL TIME. CONTRACT FOR LATTER
PROJECT WAS SIGNED ON JUNE 21 BUT CAN BE ADMENDED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KUWAIT02642
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750217-0436
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750626/aaaaaxdi.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION FBOE
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 144640
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 DEC 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 DEC 2002 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <10 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPLACEMENT OF CHANCERY WIRING AND INSTALLATION OF EMERGENCY GENERATOR, PROPERTY NUMBER 02445-A
TAGS: ABLD, KU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006